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Title: Shadow Part 4

Author:  
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Chirp, Chirp." The crickets were going about their usual business outside of Tizer's bedroom window that evening. Everything was as it always was at night in Tel'Mithrim Glade. The only difference was in the state of the Elven leader's eyelids: they were open. He could not rest, even in his comfortable bed. Ever since he had entered his bedroom, a small knot in his stomach had formed and grown steadily throughout the night. He thought it odd because supper had been relatively small, as usual. The only time he felt stomach pains was after dining with the Axepeak Dwarves or the Edanea at KORT. They always eat such heavy foods, which, though quite delicious at the time, always upset his stomach.

Even while thinking of his last meal, however, Tizer knew that the pains were not from indigestion. The feeling was reminiscent of his encounter with a shade several years past while walking through the Lost Hills. The fear it had caused was so great that his entire body tensed up and he froze in place for several seconds. Only after he had fought off the terror that was slowly gripping his chest could he dispatch the

creature with several  
well-placed fireballs.

Remembering this  
experience, he shot up in  
his bed and looked around  
the room. Shades were  
easily detectable through  
infravision because of  
their lack of heat. He did  
not see anything  
suspicious, but  
nevertheless he donned his  
cloak and stepped out  
into the hallway with  
nothing on his feet. He  
made his way to the  
dining hall and noticed the  
light shining on the floor  
through the large circular  
window near the roof. It  
was a deep blue, almost  
green, color. In all his  
years, he had never seen  
the moon cast such a  
strange light as that,  
even through storm  
clouds. Curious, he  
stepped out the front  
door into Tel'Mithrim  
Glade.

The first thing he noticed  
upon exiting the hall was  
that the forest was  
utterly silent. The  
crickets were no longer  
chirping and the forest  
seemed as though it were  
lying in wait, crouched in  
anticipation of the hapless  
creature that dares to  
step into its woody maw.  
The biting cold was the  
second thing he noticed.  
His feet became numb  
almost immediately upon  
standing in the frosted  
grass. He took a deep  
breath of the night's air  
through his nose and cold  
gripped his chest. Feeling  
moistness on his upper  
lip, Tizer held out his  
hand to feel for rain.  
The air was dry and cold  
as death, however. The  
Elf then touched his

upper lip and saw that it was blood, trickling from his nose. Not wanting to stain his cloak, he returned to the guild hall and retrieved a cloth from behind the bar in the dining hall.

It was quite obvious to the Elven leader that this night was like no other. He thought of his guests, Edan and Jem, and swiftly padded to the guest section of the hall in his bare feet which were throbbing slightly, having been returned to the warmth of the hall's floors. Tizer stood outside of Edan's door and he heard soft breathing, as was normal for an Elf in reverie. He cracked the door slightly to make sure his guest was intact. Edan was resting peacefully in his bed. "Poor Edan... Rest well, mellonamin," whispered Tizer, remembering with a shiver the gruesome sight he had seen upon discovering his brother Tarion's mutilated body.

Continuing down the hall to the second guest room, Tizer let out a short sigh of relief at Edan's apparent safety. When he approached Jem's door, however, he heard nothing. He considered the possibility of her breathing more quietly than other Elves and cracked the door to her room. The bed was empty, though not disturbed. It was made as it had been when Jem had arrived. Shocked at the sight, Tizer flung the door open, dread welling up inside of him. He did

not call her name, for  
fear of waking of Edan,  
but he searched her room  
thoroughly. Her belongings  
were not in the closet. It  
was as though she had  
never stayed at  
Tel'Mithrim Hall. Puzzled,  
the aged Elf went to the  
window and examined the  
latch. It appeared to be  
untouched. Jem had  
vanished, and so shortly  
after Tarion's murder,  
Tizer expected the worse.

Riklaun did not get much  
sleep the night before.  
He had stayed up much  
of the night looking for  
any clues as to why and  
who could have done this  
atrocious. He had gone  
over the building with a  
fine tooth comb and had  
found no clues, save one.  
Tarion had been alone  
when it happened. There  
were no foot prints  
outside or inside the  
building. Strongbow, Nalynn  
and Lyrianda wouldn't  
report from LongSaddle,  
Tarion's stomping grounds,  
for a few days. The  
same could be expected  
from Brisid and Taelsin  
who were in Neverwinter.

"Starrbolt, keep a  
watchful eye on the area.  
I am going to Triboar to  
see what I can find out.  
Make sure that guards  
are placed during the  
night." Rikalun said.

"Quel fara, Rik," Starrbolt  
called. He gave Rik a  
quick wave and went  
inside the dojo.

Riklaun walked to Tizer's  
home to see if Edan and  
Jem wanted to tag along.  
When he got there, Tizer

was talking to Edan,  
Rayella and Lightning.

"Morning Riklaun!" he  
heard in his mind. Rik  
looked down at Lightning.

"And good morning to you  
too!"

"Rik!" Tizer said. "We've  
got some more disturbing  
news. Jem has  
disappeared. There is no  
sign of any struggle or  
forced entry. It looks as  
if she never slept in her  
room."

Riklaun went inside and  
looked around. "You won't  
find anything. It's  
untouched. she was not in  
here at all last night."  
Tizer said. "We did find  
tracks of hers that led  
to the guest hall where  
Tarion was killed."

"I did not see her last  
night. Edan, you are a  
tracker. Let's locate her."  
Riklaun said.

Rikalun and Edan gathered  
their things. "I'm coming  
along, Rik, if ye don't  
mind," Rayella said.

"Yea, me too," Lightning  
voiced.

Tizer watched as the  
three Elves and Lightning  
went out in search of  
Jem Val'istar

"I hope they do not get  
into trouble." Tizer said.

"But then Rik's middle  
name is trouble..." Tizer  
walked back inside of his  
office. Being the Captain  
had it's advantages, but  
right now he was dreading  
returning to the mound  
of paperwork sitting on  
his desk. Tizer looked at  
the desk and frowned. He

grabbed his sword that  
hung on the back of his  
chair and left the office.  
He headed out into the  
woods to visit his long  
time friend and do some  
thinking. Lwynis would love  
his company.

The crickets chirping  
comforted Fenila as she  
waited in the dark woods.  
The dense canopy filtered  
the early dawn light,  
keeping parts of the  
ground in black shadow.  
Huffing a sigh of  
impatience, the Elf girl  
circled a tree restlessly.